

The

SMITH HILL REPORT



PUBLISHED BY THE RHODE ISLAND FEDERATION OF TEACHERS & HEALTH PROFESSIONALS/AFT, AFL-CIO

Full Day Kindergarten Study

On Wednesday, March 12, the RIFTHP testified in support of Chairwoman Hanna Gallo’s bill ([S2433](#)) to create a study commission to investigate the funding necessary to expand full day kindergarten throughout the State. RIFTHP lobbyist James Parisi thanked the sponsor for her leadership on the issue and promised to continue the union’s support of universal kindergarten. He noted that while other states are looking to create universal Pre-K, Rhode Island still has not achieved universal K. The RIFTHP is named to serve on the joint study commission.

Andy Andrade of RIDE testified in support of the study and asked that the Commissioner be included as a member. Elizabeth Burke Bryant of RI Kids Count also testified in support of the bill.

The bill was held for further study.

Senator Gallo has drafted a new bill to require full day kindergarten throughout Rhode Island.

Mandatory Music Education

On Wednesday, March 12, the RIFTHP testified in support of a bill ([S2012](#)) by Senator Picard to mandate that music education be offered to all Rhode Island secondary students. The RIFTHP noted that because of the overreliance on standardized tests and the current economic recession, art and music offerings have been cut by school districts to the detriment of students. He suggested the bill be broadened to require instruction in the arts throughout the school system.

Also testifying in support of the bill was Nicole Denton, a Woonsocket Teachers’ Guild member and Band Director, and the Director of Education for the Rhode Island Philharmonic Music School, Annette Mozzoni.

The bill was held for further study.

Higher Education For Profit

A bill by Representative Patricia Morgan would open the doors for private for-profit corporations to award academic degrees in Rhode Island. The bill, [H7443](#), is another version of legislation the RIFTHP has opposed for years. RIFTHP lobbyist James Parisi testified in opposition to the measure on March 12 before the House HEW Committee. He told the Committee that for-profit organizations have a terrible track record for student loan

March 17, 2014

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default. He said that there is no need to give companies with a profit motive the authority to award academic degrees. For profit schools can exist in Rhode Island, but the awarding of academic degrees should be reserved for public and non-profit institutions.

The bill was held for further study.

Teacher/Municipal Bargaining

RIFTHP lobbyist Maureen Martin testified before the House Committee on Municipal Government on Thursday, March 13, in support of bill [H7633](#) (Serpa) which would allow collective bargaining agreements in cities or towns with private pension plans in "critical status" to bargain 5 year contracts. The maximum duration of public sector contracts is three years, except cities or towns that are in fiscal distress and have budget commissions. When a budget commission is in place, contracts can be as long as five years.

Others testifying in support of this bill included Patrick Crowley from the NEA/RI, Paul Valetta from the RI Association of Fire Fighters, Tony Capezza from the International Association of Police Officers, and Peder Schaefer from the RI League of Cities and Towns. Senator Adam Satchell, who sponsored the Senate version of the bill, testified in support of this bill and stressed the urgency of its passage in a timely manner to help West Warwick, the district he represents. Also testifying in support of this bill was the West Warwick Town Manager.

The bill was held for further study.

Gubernatorial Candidates Forum

A 2014 Rhode Island Gubernatorial Candidates Forum will be hosted by the Economic Progress Institute on April 7, 2014. This free forum will be held at the Ocean State Theatre, 1245 Jefferson Boulevard, Warwick, RI 02886. It will take place from 5:00PM to 6:30PM. To register, go to: [Gubernatorial Candidates Forum Registration](#). Send a question(s) that you want asked of the candidates to info@economicprogressri.org.

Bill Introductions

If you would like to read the full text of a bill, just click on the bill number.

Teacher and Municipal Worker Contract Continuation

([H7465](#) Carnevale, House Labor)

([S2411](#) McCaffrey, Senate Labor)

The RIFTHP supports these bills which would require that the contractual provisions contained in a collective bargaining agreement with certified school teachers and municipal employees would continue until a successor agreement has been reached between the parties.

Municipal Privatization

([H7469](#) Carnevale, House Municipal Government)

The RIFTHP supports this bill which would establish a process governing the privatization of municipal services analogous to present chapter 42-148 governing the privatization of state services.

Rhode Island Tax Equity

[Senate/House Committee Assignments](#)

A forum on holding a Constitutional Convention is being held March 29, 2014 at the Hassenfeld Institute for Public Leadership, Bryant University. To register go to:

[Con Con Registration](#)



Building Futures part 3
- program graduates
and director

Building Futures part 2
- Congressman
Langevin

AFL-CIO Convention
part 2 - Patrick Quinn

LaborVision is seen on Cox
Ch. 14 and FioS Ch. 33

Tuesdays @ 7PM

Thursday @ 8PM

Saturday @ 5PM

([H7471](#) *Cimini, House Finance*)

The RIFTHP supports this bill which would impose a two percent (2%) tax increase for all personal income over two hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$250,000).

Tax Equity

([H7552](#) *Valencia, House Finance*)

The RIFTHP supports this bill which would add a 4.01% additional tax on all personal income over \$200,000 for heads of households, unmarried individuals, married individuals filing separate returns and bankruptcy estates and a 4.01% over \$250,000 for married couples filing joint returns and qualifying widows(ers).

DSP Rate Increase

([H7570](#) *Hull, House Finance*)

The RIFTHP supports this bill which requires the Director of BHDDH to adopt a state reimbursement system for community and non-profit agencies that encourages the hiring and retention of competent individuals. This rate will be \$13.97 per hour and will be adjusted annually.

Coming Up

On Wednesday, [March 19](#), at the rise, the House Health, Education and Welfare Committee will hear testimony on [H7444](#) (Mayoral Charter School Approval, *Palumbo*). On Thursday, [March 20](#), at the rise, the House Finance Committee will hear testimony on the DCYF budget. On Tuesday, [March 25](#), at the rise, the House Finance Committee will hear testimony on the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education budget and on Thursday, [March 27](#), at the rise, it will hear testimony on the Public Higher Education budget .

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